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MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 16, 2014

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AVTA AWARDED AIR DISTRICT'S HIGHEST HONOR

Transit Agency Earns Second AIRE in a Decade for Electric Bus Technology

Lancaster – The Antelope Valley Transit Authority was recognized today by the Governing Board of the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District, as the local transit agency was presented with the 2013/2014 Wm. J. “Pete” Knight Memorial AIRE (Achievement in Reducing Emissions) Award for introducing zero-emission electric bus technology to the Antelope Valley.

The AIRE award is bestowed annually to a local entity or individual which has demonstrated an exceptional commitment to protecting air quality within the AVAQMD’s boundaries, which encompass the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale and unincorporated areas of North Los Angeles County. The award was accepted by AVTA Board Chairman Norm Hickling during the local regulatory agency’s monthly Governing Board meeting in Lancaster.

The AVTA received the AVAQMD’s highest honor for collaborating with Lancaster-based electric bus manufacturer BYD to deploy two 40-foot, battery-electric buses onto Antelope Valley streets, which are expected to be in service by the end of this summer. The zero-emission buses will be evaluated over the next 12 months as part of a demonstration project to determine the viability of converting more of AVTA’s diesel fleet to electric, a move which is strongly supported by the AVTA’s Board of Directors.

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It is estimated that utilizing the two electric buses in lieu of traditional diesel fueled vehicles will reduce AVTA's carbon footprint by 256 metric tons per year. Plans are also underway for the installation of a wireless inductive charging system that utilizes cutting-edge technology to recharge bus batteries while the buses are in service.

In 2012, the AVTA also took an important step towards reducing particulate emissions while improving fuel economy by incorporating 15 diesel/electric hybrids into the local transit fleet. As a result of making the switch from straight diesel to hybrid buses, gas mileage improvements of up to 35% have resulted, while AVTA's overall emissions have been reduced by 402 metric tons per year.

In January of 2013, AVTA completed an expansion of its Sustainable Photovoltaic Solar Carport System to include the Lancaster facility's bus yard. As a result, AVTA now generates 100% of the facility's electricity needs while also receiving half a million dollars in rebates from SCE. The completed system generates 720 kW of clean energy per hour, while also providing cooling shade protection to AVTA's buses.

"The AVAQMD applauds AVTA's commitment to balancing its business operations with its environmental responsibilities," commented AVAQMD Governing Board Chair Marvin Crist, adding, "We are proud to recognize the AVTA's pivotal role in promoting clean energy sources which protect the Antelope Valley's legendary air quality."

This is the second AIRE award conferred on the AVTA for outstanding contributions to preventing air pollution in the Antelope Valley within the last decade. The first was presented in 2004.

The Wm. J. "Pete" Knight Memorial AIRE Award is presented each year in conjunction with National Pollution Prevention Week, which is observed the third week of September. In 2005, the AVAQMD's Governing Board renamed the District's highest honor after the late Senator Wm. "Pete" Knight, in recognition of his pivotal role in the creation of the AVAQMD as a separate, locally governed air agency.

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